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November 19, 2010

The Honorable Robert Gates  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Gates:

When I enlisted in the United States Army in 1972, the United States was still entrenched in an ideological struggle with the nations and the insurgencies who strongly held a shared allegiance to Marxist Communism and who listed the United States as their chief adversary.

I can clearly remember as a young soldier being ordered to affirm, under oath, whether I was or had ever been a member of the Communist Party and whether I had any associations or sympathies with other related organizations that might call into question my allegiance to the United States government. I was assigned to an armored division in Europe where an active counterintelligence operation made sure this enemy ideology never penetrated our ranks.

The United States, once again, finds itself in an ideological struggle - more challenging than the last. This time a political ideology has emerged that is fraudulently camouflaged within a religious tradition and is so twisted in its beliefs that it values death over life and uses terrorism as its only tactic.

Just as the United States had previously recognized that it was in an ideological war with Marxist Communism, now it must come to terms with accurately describing the current threat to our national security: radical Islam. Unfortunately, our military, constrained by the Obama administration, has yet to do so for fear that it might offend the loyal adherents to the virtues of political correctness that has lead this administration to change "Global War on Terror" to "Overseas Contingency Operations" and "Terrorists Attacks" to "Man-Caused Disasters." Neither of these semantic changes,

nor any other attempts at avoiding reality, has altered the fact that we are at war with radical Islam and that terrorism is their weapon of choice.

Three days after the massacre at Ft. Hood, Texas where 13 soldiers were killed and 30 were wounded, General George Casey, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, stated, "Speculation could potentially heighten backlash against some of our Muslim soldiers and what happened at Ft. Hood was a tragedy, but I believe it would be an even greater tragedy if our diversity becomes a casualty here."

The U.S. Army's "*Final Report on Fort Hood*," released last week, reflects the views earlier expressed by General Casey in avoiding the role that radical Islam played in the killing of 13 American soldiers.

The final report does recognize that the Army did not properly identify the internal threat Major Nidal Hasan posed before he killed 13 American soldiers, but, unfortunately, it falls short of identifying the significance of the threat that the radicalization of Muslims can pose within our military.

Because the *Fort Hood Shooting Army Internal Review Team* did not recognize and clearly address the threat of radical Islam, I believe it gives further evidence to a failure of leadership. I am calling for immediate action on your part, and that of the Department of the Army, to update the report to accurately address this threat and detail what appropriate measures are necessary to counter it.

I served in Iraq in 2005 and in 2006 with the U.S. Marine Corps where I met Muslim-Americans who served our nation with distinction and were every bit as patriotic as other members of our military. I strongly believe that it would be in the best interest of not only our military but to Muslim Americans, in particular, to have a vigorous vetting process whereby members of our Armed Forces would have full confidence that all our service men and women could, at all times, be counted on.

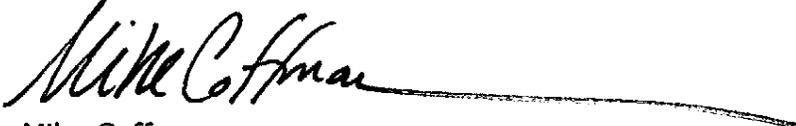
The unintended consequences of the "politically correct" approach, currently advocated by the U.S. Army, will ultimately have the negative effect of only increasing the suspicions of Muslim American military personnel and thereby potentially causing increased alienation, segregation, and finally the radicalization of Muslim American personnel.

I strongly believe that the failure to classify radical Islam as an ideological threat to the United States led to the loss of 13 American soldiers at Ft. Hood, Texas. If we continue down this path we will fail to develop the counterintelligence capability necessary to prevent future incidents from occurring. It is time now for the American people to ask:

How many more soldiers must be sacrificed at the altar of political correctness before our military changes course?

Thank you for your attention to this urgent and highest priority matter. I stand willing to discuss this with you at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Coffman". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long, thin horizontal line that extends to the right.

Mike Coffman

United States Congress